### BEFORE THE ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION

2	WILLIAM A. MUNDELL		
3	Chairman JIM IRVIN		
5	Commissioner		
4	MARC SPITZER		
5	Commissioner		
6	In the matter of:	) Docket No. S-03467A-01-0000	
7	REPUBLIC CASH ADVANCE, INC. 1616 East Main Street, Suite 226	) ) 	
8	Mesa, Arizona 85203	) Decision No65035	
9	QUICK CASH ADVANCE, INC. 1616 East Main Street, Suite 226	) ) ODDED TO CEACE AND DEGREE	
10	Mesa, Arizona 85203	<ul> <li>ORDER TO CEASE AND DESIST</li> <li>AND ORDER FOR OTHER RELIEF</li> <li>AS AGAINST RESPONDENTS</li> </ul>	
11	CURTIS J. BILLUPS	) REPUBLIC CASH ADVANCE, INC.,	
12	51089 West Papago Road Maricopa, Arizona 85239	<ul><li>QUICK CASH ADVANCE, INC.,</li><li>CURTIS J. BILLUPS AND MARK N.</li><li>FERGUSON</li></ul>	
13	MADIZ N. EEDCUCON	) FERGUSON	
14	MARK N. FERGUSON 15433 North 45 <sup>th</sup> Street		
15	Phoenix, Arizona 85032		
16	Respondents.	) )	
17		I.	
18	INTRODUCTION		
19	On August 20, 2001, the Securities	Division ("Division") of the Arizona Corporati	

On August 20, 2001, the Securities Division ("Division") of the Arizona Corporation Commission ("Commission") filed a Temporary Order to Cease and Desist and Notice of Opportunity for Hearing ("TC&D") against REPUBLIC CASH ADVANCE, INC., QUICK CASH ADVANCE, INC., CURTIS J. BILLUPS and MARK N. FERGUSON. On this same date, the TC&D was personally served on REPUBLIC CASH ADVANCE, QUICK CASH ADVANCE and FERGUSON. Shortly thereafter, on August 28, 2001, the Division effected service on BILLUPS, the remaining Respondent in this matter, through the acceptance of service by BILLUPS' Florida attorney, Richard P. Green.

The TC&D afforded the Respondents the opportunity to request a hearing with the Commission within 20 days from each of these Respondents' respective dates of service. To date, none of the Respondents have requested a hearing or have otherwise made any formal appearance in this case. As such, Respondents REPUBLIC CASH ADVANCE, QUICK CASH ADVANCE, BILLUPS and FERGUSON have chosen not to contest the Division's allegations in this matter.

II.

#### FINDINGS OF FACT

- 1. REPUBLIC CASH ADVANCE, INC. ("REPUBLIC"), whose last known address was 1616 East Main Street, Suite 226, Mesa, Arizona, was a Nevada corporation involved in the solicitation of investment capital for various Florida check cashing stores and other "accounts receivable" operations.
- 2. QUICK CASH ADVANCE, INC. ("QUICK CASH"), whose last known address was 1616 East Main Street, Suite 226, Mesa, Arizona, was a Florida corporation closely affiliated with REPUBLIC, and was also involved in the generation of investment capital to finance various Florida check cashing stores and at least one accounts receivable program.
- CURTIS J. BILLUPS ("BILLUPS"), whose last known address was 51089 West
   Papago Road, Maricopa, Arizona, was the president, CEO and principal shareholder of both
   REPUBLIC and QUICK CASH.
- 4. MARK N. FERGUSON ("FERGUSON"), whose last known address was 15433 North 45<sup>th</sup> Street, Phoenix, Arizona, was the project manager of the telemarketing office at the previous REPUBLIC/QUICK CASH headquarters in Tempe, Arizona, and in that capacity oversaw the solicitation activities at those offices.
- 5. REPUBLIC, QUICK CASH, BILLUPS, and FERGUSON may be collectively referred to as "RESPONDENTS."
- 6. RESPONDENTS have been engaging in the offer and sale of investment products within or from Arizona since at least the fall of 1998. During this period, RESPONDENTS have

been involved in a series of securities offerings, each of these ostensibly designed to finance either the development of a Florida check-cashing enterprise or to fund the creation of an accounts receivable or "factoring" program.

- 7. During the period from late 1998 through November, 2001, RESPONDENTS raised a minimum of \$6,248,492 in investment funds from at least 420 separate investors throughout the United States. The bulk of this money was expended on sales commissions, salaries, promotional costs and personal items; only a fraction of these funds was used for business purposes as set forth in the various private placement materials provided to investors.
- 8. Each of the offerings alluded to above originated out of greater Phoenix locations; the investment literature for these programs was distributed out of RESPONDENTS' Phoenix (and later Tempe) main offices, and the investment funds for the various programs were routinely remitted back to bank accounts located in nearby Mesa, Arizona. These accounts were uniformly held in the names of BILLUPS, REPUBLIC and/or QUICK CASH; BILLUPS was the signatory on most if not all of these accounts.
- 9. In total, RESPONDENTS solicited investment funds for at least eight distinct programs. These investment projects included a check-cashing venture with Republic Cash Advance of Tampa, L.L.C. in 1998, a check-cashing venture with Republic Cash Advance of Orlando, L.L.C. in 1999, check-cashing ventures with Quick Cash Advance of Fort Lauderdale, L.L.C. and Quick Cash Advance of Miami, L.L.C. in 2000, and a check-cashing venture with Quick Cash Advance of Dade County, L.L.C. in 2001. Beyond these check-cashing programs, RESPONDENTS also launched two REPUBLIC factoring programs and one QUICK CASH factoring program during 2001.
- 10. RESPONDENTS' sales tactics were similar in each of the various investment programs. In the Republic Cash Advance of Tampa, L.L.C. private offering, for instance, REPUBLIC sales representatives "cold-called" prospective investors across the country to offer these individuals an opportunity to invest in REPUBLIC'S check-cashing operations in the greater

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Tampa area.

- 11. After receiving the unsolicited calls, many of the prospective investors subsequently received a private placement memorandum from REPUBLIC, listing BILLUPS as the president, treasurer and director of the company. These investors, many of whom were unaccredited individuals, had insufficient knowledge of financial matters to adequately evaluate the terms of the offering.
- 12. The offering materials claimed that REPUBLIC was planning to establish a franchise of check-cashing stores in the Tampa metro area, and that prospective investors could participate in the project by purchasing a minimum of two membership units at a cost of \$10,000 per unit.
- 13. According to these same materials, REPUBLIC'S securities offering was exempt from federal registration pursuant to a federal 504 filing, notwithstanding the fact no such 504 filing was ever made. Concurrently, the offering materials failed to disclose that REPUBLIC'S securities offering was neither registered nor exempt from registration in the state of Arizona.
- 14. The investment literature also claimed that the investment funds would be primarily used for working capital for the check-cashing stores, when in fact a large segment of the investment funds were ultimately diverted for non-business related purposes.
- 15. On account of the Tampa L.L.C. offering, the Illinois Securities Department issued an Order of Prohibition in 2000, directing Republic Cash Advance of Tampa, L.L.C., REPUBLIC, BILLUPS, and any affiliates or other employees, to cease and desist from their unauthorized selling activities within the state of Illinois.
- 16. The misrepresentations and omissions outlined above were largely mirrored in REPUBLIC'S next project, the Republic Cash Advance of Orlando L.L.C. offering in 1999. In this program, telemarketers once again offered and sold prospective investors membership interests in a REPUBLIC limited liability company purportedly designed to establish a series of check-cashing stores in the greater Orlando area.

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- 17. On account of this and the prior Tampa L.L.C. offering, several additional state agencies, including Pennsylvania and South Dakota, issued Cease and Desist Orders against REPUBLIC, BILLUPS, and several of his affiliates in connection with the fraudulent and/or unauthorized sale of unregistered securities.
- 18. Notwithstanding these Orders, QUICK CASH sales representatives were soon making additional cold calls in 2000 to sell new membership interests in the company Quick Cash Advance of Fort Lauderdale, L.L.C., an enterprise purportedly set up to manage several Fort Lauderdale, Florida check-cashing facilities.
- 19. According to the private placement memorandum associated with this offering, BILLUPS was again the president, director and treasurer of QUICK CASH. QUICK CASH was also designated as the managing member of the Quick Cash of Fort Lauderdale check-cashing operation.
- 20. As with the prior REPUBLIC offerings, the promotion of the Quick Cash of Fort Lauderdale program included a number of misrepresentations, including the claim that the investment funds would primarily be used for working capital purposes set forth in the offering memorandum, and that the securities had an applicable exemption from registration on the federal and state level. In actuality, large amounts of investment funds were being used to pay exorbitant sales commissions to participating telemarketing firms, and neither the Quick Cash of Fort Lauderdale salesmen nor the securities themselves were registered in Arizona.
- 21. Promotional materials for this securities offering also claimed that investors in this check cashing company could expect to generate a return of up to 25 times the original investment when the securities "went public." In fact, the Quick Cash of Fort Lauderdale securities offering had no basis upon which to predict a 25 to 1 return to principal, particularly where the project had failed to generate any demonstrable profits.

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- 22. The Quick Cash of Fort Lauderdale offering memoranda also failed to disclose that BILLUPS and REPUBLIC, the owner and predecessor to QUICK CASH, respectively, had recently been the targets of a number of Cease and Desist orders from several state securities agencies.
- 23. RESPONDENTS continued to offer and sell securities in different but related programs just months later. These offerings included investments in Quick Cash Advance of Miami, L.L.C. and Quick Cash of Dade County, L.L.C., each again based out of Arizona. Both of these offering contained the same misrepresentations and omissions as the earlier L.L.C. offerings, with the similar added omission relating to the outstanding regulatory sanctions.
- 24. By 2001, RESPONDENTS were still selling investments to support the alleged Florida check-cashing operations. In February of 2001, REPUBLIC sales representatives began a telemarketing campaign for the purpose of offering prospective investors the opportunity to invest in a REPUBLIC promissory note issuance. According to the investment literature associated with this note offering, the investment monies raised were purportedly designated for two purposes: to support the ongoing operations of various Florida check-cashing stores and to finance the development of a "factoring" program a program whereby REPUBLIC would purchase discounted accounts receivable from established businesses and resell them at a profit.
- 25. As represented by the sales agents in this REPUBLIC note program, the private placement of these notes would produce a return to the investor of 5% in 90 days (or approximately 22.2% per annum), at which time the investors could purportedly recover their principal or choose to rollover their investments for another investment term.
- 26. Most of the promissory note investment proceeds were in fact diverted for undisclosed expenditures including sales commissions, salaries, marketing costs and personal items. In fact, REPUBLIC'S payment of sales commissions for the solicitation of these investments reached upwards of 35 to 50 percent of the total amount of investment monies generated despite promotional claims that there would be no sales commissions associated with this offering.

27. The investment literature for this promissory note program again claimed that these securities were exempt from registration on the state level and exempt on the federal level pursuant to Rule 504 of Regulation D and/or Section 4(2) of the Securities Act of 1933, when in fact this offering was ineligible for any such exemption.

- 28. By May 2001, RESPONDENTS were selling yet another related investment "opportunity." This time, a number of out-of state and Tempe salesmen, including FERGUSON, began a telemarketing campaign for the purpose of offering prospective investors the chance to invest in a QUICK CASH promissory note offering. According to the prospectus associated with this alleged private placement, the investment monies raised from this note offering were being solicited to finance the development of a QUICK CASH factoring program, another operation whereby QUICK CASH planned to purchase discounted accounts receivable from established businesses for subsequent resale.
- 29. As represented by the sales agents in this QUICK CASH note program, the alleged private placement of these notes would produce a return to the investor of 20% in 9 months (or an interest rate of approximately 26.67% per annum), at which time the investors could purportedly recover their principal or choose to rollover their investments for an additional term.
- 30. Most of the investment proceeds solicited through the QUICK CASH note offering were again diverted for undisclosed expenditures including sales commissions, salaries, marketing costs and personal items. QUICK CASH'S payment of sales commissions for the solicitation of these promissory note investments ranged anywhere from 7 to 50 percent of the total amount of investment monies generated. FERGUSON encouraged his Tempe sales staff that they could make upwards of \$10,000 to \$14,000 per week in sales commissions for their sales efforts.
- 31. BILLUPS was again listed as the acting president and CEO of QUICK CASH'S note program, and FERGUSON was designated as the Tempe project manager for this offering. As part

 of his managerial functions, FERGUSON trained telemarketers and assisted less seasoned salesmen in "closing" sales to tentative investors.

- 32. The promissory notes that made up this offering were not registered with the Division, and no notice filings were made with the Division in connection with this security. Similarly, neither FERGUSON and the other salesmen who solicited this offering, nor QUICK CASH, the issuer-dealer of this security, was registered as salesmen or a dealer in the state of Arizona.
- 33. By the fall of 2001, RESPONDENTS were still selling yet another investment to the general public. In August of 2001, REPUBLIC sales representatives began a telemarketing campaign for the purpose of offering prospective investors the opportunity to invest in a second REPUBLIC promissory note issuance. According to the investment literature associated with this offering, the investment monies raised from this note sale would finance yet another REPUBLIC "factoring" program.
- 34. As represented by the sales agents in this second REPUBLIC factoring program, the alleged private placement of these notes would produce a return to the investor of 20% per annum and have a maturity term of 90 days, after which the investors could recover their principal or once again elect to rollover their investments.
- 35. Most of the promissory note investment proceeds were in fact diverted for undisclosed expenditures including sales commissions, salaries, marketing costs and personal items. As before, even though the investment literature specifically stated that there would be no sales commissions associated with this note offering, REPUBLIC'S payment of sales commissions for the solicitation of these investments ranged anywhere from 35 to 50 percent of the total amount of investment monies generated.
- 36. The offering materials for REPUBLIC'S second promissory note "private placement" again originated out of the business offices of REPUBLIC and QUICK CASH in Tempe, Arizona, although the general solicitations associated with these note sales took place as

far away as Florida. Notwithstanding the multi-state telemarketing network, the investment funds for this program were subsequently mailed back to Tempe or wired directly into REPUBLIC bank accounts in Mesa, Arizona.

- 37. As with all the previous offerings, the promissory notes that made up this offering were not registered with the Division, and no notice filings were made with the Division in connection with this security. Similarly, neither the salesmen who solicited this offering, nor REPUBLIC, the issuer-dealer of this security, were registered as salesmen or dealers in the state of Arizona.
- 38. As before, the investment literature for this promissory note program once again failed to disclose that both REPUBLIC and BILLUPS had previously received multiple cease and desist orders for securities violations from other jurisdictions.
- 39. On December 21, 2001, BILLUPS sent a letter to the many investors in the various QUICK CASH and REPUBLIC investment programs, including those in the Tampa, Orlando, Fort Lauderdale, Miami, and Dade County L.L.C.s, as well as those in the various promissory note factoring programs. This letter claimed that the companies were closing down as a result of the adverse business affects caused by the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, and that the investors would no longer be receiving interest payments on their investments. Also evident from this letter was the fact that the investors would no longer have recourse to recover their principal investments.
- 40. An attorney for BILLUPS subsequently sent a letter to former investors in April, 2002, claiming that the companies would be liquidating their assets, and that the investors might recover a portion of their investments upon the completion of this liquidation. The attorney intimated that any complaints or inquiries about the companies' operations and/or liquidation process would jeopardize the process as well as any possible recovery by the investors. As of June 2002, the Division is unaware of any implicated investors that have received monies from this purported liquidation.

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# **Summary of Respondents' Securities Offerings**

41. During their period of operation, RESPONDENTS raised and/or deposited into personal and company bank accounts a minimum of \$6,248,492 in investment funds in connection with the sale of securities arising out of at least eight distinct investment programs. The revenues from the sale of these various limited partnership and/or promissory note investments made by RESPONDENTS from their metro Phoenix headquarters can be isolated more specifically as follows:

	<u>Program</u>	Minimum Investment Amount Raised
a)	RCA of Tampa, L.L.C.	\$ 510,000
<i>b)</i>	RCA of Orlando, L.L.C.	\$1,080,000
c)	QCA of Fort Lauderdale, L.L.C.	\$1,055,000
d)	QCA of Miami, L.L.C.	\$ 960,000
e)	RCA, Inc. Factoring Notes I & II	\$1,313,500
Ŋ	QCA, Inc. Factoring Notes	\$1,095,000
g)	QCA of Dade County, L.L.C.	\$ 234,992
	TOTAL:	\$6,248,492

- 42. To date, none of the above investment programs offered and sold by RESPONDENTS have fulfilled the promised returns to investors.
- 43. None of the securities referenced above were duly registered under A.R.S. §§ 44-1871 through 44-1875, or 44-1891 through 44-1902; none of the above were exempt under A.R.S. §§ 44-1843 or 44-1843.01; none of the above were offered or sold as exempt transactions under A.R.S. § 44-1844; and none of the above were exempt under any rule or order promulgated by the Commission.

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44. In connection with the offers to sell and the sale of securities, RESPONDENTS acted as dealers and/or salesmen within and from Arizona, although not registered pursuant to the provisions of Article 9 of the Securities Act of Arizona.

- 45. In connection with the offers and sales of securities within and from Arizona, RESPONDENTS directly or indirectly: (i) employed a device, scheme or artifice to defraud; (ii) made untrue statements of material fact or omitted to state material facts which were necessary in order to make the statements made not misleading in light of the circumstances under which they were made; and (iii) engaged in transactions, practices or courses of business which operated or would operate as a fraud or deceit upon offerees and investors. RESPONDENTS' conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following actions:
  - a) RESPONDENTS misrepresented to investors that the securities being offered were exempt from state and federal securities registration provisions, when in fact the securities were not eligible for such exemptions.
  - b) RESPONDENTS failed to disclose to investors that RESPONDENTS were not duly registered as either salesmen or dealers within the state of Arizona.
  - c) RESPONDENTS misrepresented to investors that their investment proceeds were to be used primarily as operating capital for check-cashing stores and/or for the purchase of discounted accounts receivable, when in fact the bulk of the investment monies were expended on sales commissions, salaries, marketing expenses and other personal expenditures.
  - d) RESPONDENTS misrepresented to investors that their investments would be worth up to 25 times their initial investment amounts once the RESPONDENTS' programs "went public," when in fact RESPONDENTS had no financial or other cognizable basis upon which to make such an assertion.

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- e) RESPONDENTS failed to disclose to investors that approximately 35 to 50 percent of the solicited investment funds were commonly used for sales commissions and sales overrides.
- f) RESPONDENTS failed to disclose to investors that both REPUBLIC and QUICK CASH, as well as their president, BILLUPS, had previously received cease and desist orders from a number of other state regulatory agencies.

## III.

## **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

- 1. The Arizona Corporation Commission has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to Article XV of the Arizona Constitution and pursuant to the Securities Act of Arizona, A.R.S. § 44-1801, *et seq.* (the "Securities Act").
- 2. REPUBLIC, QUICK CASH, BILLUPS and FERGUSON offered and sold securities within or from Arizona within the definitions of A.R.S. §§ 44-1801(15), 44-1801(21), and 44-1801(26).
- 3. REPUBLIC, QUICK CASH, BILLUPS and FERGUSON violated A.R.S. § 44-1841 by offering or selling securities that were neither registered nor exempt from registration.
- 4. REPUBLIC, QUICK CASH, BILLUPS and FERGUSON violated A.R.S. § 44-1842 by offering or selling securities while neither registered as dealers or salesmen nor exempt from such registration.
- 5. REPUBLIC, QUICK CASH, BILLUPS and FERGUSON violated A.R.S. § 44-1991 by (a) employing a device, scheme or artifice to defraud; (b) making untrue statements or misleading omissions of material facts; and (c) engaging in transactions, practices or courses of business which operate or would operate as a fraud or deceit.

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IV. 1 **ORDER** 2 THEREFORE, on the basis of the Commission's Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, 3 the following Order is appropriate, in the public interest, and necessary for the protection of 4 5 investors: IT IS ORDERED, pursuant to A.R.S. §§ 44-2032, 44-1972 and A.A.C. R14-4-307, that the 6 7 RESPONDENTS and their agents, servants, employees, successors, assigns, and those persons in 8 active concert or participation with them CEASE AND DESIST from the following activities: 9 1) The offer and/or sale of any securities described herein within or from the state of Arizona; 10 2) The offer and/or sale of any other form of security within or from the state of 11 12 Arizona, unless such securities are registered with the Commission pursuant to Articles 6 and 7 of the Securities Act of Arizona or are otherwise duly exempt from registration; 13 14 3) The offer or sale of any securities within or from the state of Arizona unless the requisite registration as dealers and/or salesmen is first obtained under Article 9 of the Securities Act 15 16 of Arizona, or unless an exemption from registration is applicable; 4) The offer and/or sale of any securities within or from the state of Arizona through a 17 material misrepresentation or omission, and/or through a course of conduct that would operate as a 18 fraud or deceit on investors; and 19 20 5) Any other activity constituting a violation of the Securities Act of Arizona. 21 22 23 24 25 26

of \$5,153,492, 1 such restitution made payable to the state of Arizona. This restitution amount is due and payable immediately upon the effective date of this Order, and shall be distributed on a pro rata basis to known investors that have incurred losses from RESPONDENTS' various investment programs cited herein.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, pursuant to A.R.S. § 44-2032, Respondents REPUBLIC,

QUICK CASH and BILLUPS shall jointly and severally pay restitution to investors in the amount

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, pursuant to A.R.S. § 44-2032, Respondents REPUBLIC,

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, pursuant to A.R.S. § 44-2032, Respondents REPUBLIC, QUICK CASH, BILLUPS and FERGUSON shall jointly and severally pay further restitution to investors in the amount of \$1,095,000,<sup>2</sup> such additional restitution again made payable to the state of Arizona. This restitution amount is also due and payable immediately upon the effective date of this Order, and shall be distributed on a pro rata basis to known investors that have incurred losses from RESPONDENTS' various investment programs cited herein.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, pursuant to A.R.S. § 44-2036, RESPONDENTS shall jointly and severally pay an administrative penalty in the amount of \$100,000, payable to the "State Treasurer," immediately upon the effective date of this Order for deposit into the general fund of the state of Arizona. This administrative penalty shall be considered a subordinate debt obligation to the restitution obligations outlined above.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the restitution and administrative penalties prescribed above shall accrue interest at the maximum legal rate from the effective date of this Order until paid in full.

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This restitution figure represents the total amount of investor funds solicited through investment programs **a**), **b**), **c**), **d**), **e**) and **g**) as identified in paragraph No. 41 above.

This restitution figure represents the total amount of investor funds solicited through investment program **f**) as identified in paragraph No. 41 above.

1	IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this Order shall become effective immediately upon the					
2	date set forth below.					
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4	BY ORDER OF THE ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION					
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7	CHAIRMAN	COMMISSIONER	COMMISSIONER			
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10		IN WITNESS WHEREOF Executive Secretary of				
11		Commission, have hereunto official seal of the Commi				
12		Capitol, in the City of Pl , 2002.				
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15		BRIAN C. McNEIL Executive Secretary				
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18	DISSENT					
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21	(JP)					
22						
23	This document is available in alternative formats by contacting Shelly M. Hood, Exec					
24	Assistant to the Executive Secretary, voice phone number 602-542-3931, E-mail addresshood@cc.state.az.us					
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